



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1999
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

AT
(202) 202-514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

**FORMER HOUSTON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY EXECUTIVE CHARGED
WITH PARTICIPATING IN INTERNATIONAL BID RIGGING CARTEL**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A former Houston-based marine construction company executive was charged today with participating in an international conspiracy to rig bids for marine construction projects in the United States and elsewhere, said the Department of Justice.

The one-count felony case, filed in U.S. District Court in Houston, charges Littleton Edwards Walker, former Senior Vice President of Business Development and Strategic Initiatives for J. Ray McDermott S.A., with conspiring with others to rig bids for the sale of marine construction services in the U.S. and elsewhere. The conspiracy took place from September 1995 to January 1997. According to the court filing, Walker and co-conspirators held meetings to rig bids for marine construction projects, to agree that various conspirators would restrict their construction activities to particular regions of the world, and to devise systems to collect payments from customers at rigged prices.

This is the third case brought by the Department in its ongoing antitrust investigation of the marine construction industry. Marine construction services include the design, construction, installation, and removal of offshore oil and gas production platforms and subsea pipeline systems.

"This cartel denied customers the benefits of competitive bidding for marine construction services," said Joel I. Klein, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust

(MORE)

Division. “Today’s charge affirms the Division’s commitment to prosecute vigorously international cartels that harm American citizens and companies. ”

In December 1997, HeereMac v.o.f., a Netherlands-based marine contractor, and HeereMac’s commercial director, Jan Meek, a Dutch national, pleaded guilty to charges of participating in an international conspiracy to rig bids for the sale of heavy-lift derrick barge services and related marine construction. Under the plea agreements, HeereMac was fined \$49 million and Meek \$100,000. They each agreed to cooperate with the government’s investigation.

In October 1998, Vincenzo Oliveri, an official of Saipem S.p.A., a Milan-based marine contractor, was charged by a Houston federal grand jury with criminal contempt for failure to appear before the grand jury in response to a subpoena. Oliveri is a fugitive.

The maximum penalty for an individual convicted of violating the Sherman Antitrust Act is three years imprisonment and a fine of the greatest of \$350,000, twice the gain derived from the crime, or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime.

Today’s charge is the result of an ongoing investigation being conducted by the Litigation I Section of the Antitrust Division, Washington, D.C., and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Houston Field Office.

###